

Crucial Series Faces Juniors

Blades Could Narrow Gap On Bucks With Twin Sweep

Well, Vernon Blades have defused Kamloops Rockets and lassoed Penticton-Summerland Broncos. What are they going to do about Kelowna Buckaroos?

A good question and one the Blades will try to go about answering satisfactorily this weekend.

The Blades take on the Buckaroos in a back-to-back two-game series Friday and Saturday, a series that could decide whether Vernon stays put or steps ahead in Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League competition.

The Blades, currently one of the hottest teams in the OJHL with two wins and a tie in their last three starts, could climb to within three points of the second place Buckaroos if they knocked off their Kelowna rivals with a double punch.

Conversely the Blues could plummet 11 points back if the Bucks happened to connect with a couple of hay-makers of their own.

So you see, it's either up or down for the Blades and there's no doubt they'll be going all out to escalate higher at the expense of Don Culley's crew.

There is a third alternative. Split the series down the middle. Lose nothing, gain nothing.

But knowing the Blades and their intense rivalry with the Buckaroos, this is probably the farthest

thing from their minds. Two wins are always better than one, particularly when it moves you a little closer to the team you've beaten.

"If we can take a couple from Kelowna we'll be right in the thick of it," said coach Hap Schaefer this week. "And I think the fellows are quite capable of doing it, too. They've proven that in their last few games."

Step One of the proposed twin killing will be attempted Friday night in Kelowna. No easy task, this. The Blades haven't beaten the Bucks on their home ice since 1962.

The second phase of the project will unravel Saturday night back here at the Civic Arena.

On their home ice the Blades have to be classed as favorites but the Bucks can be tough here too. After

all, they've beaten Vernon twice at the Civic Arena this season.

The Blades will probably be going with two lines as before. Bobby Stein, Buck Sherk and Dale Sorochnik have been working very well together of late and the trio of Ike Coulter, Ralph Litzenberger and Allan Rogan has been no slouch either.

Several extra forwards will doubtless see some action including a newcomer, Marvin Maier, recently cut by Penticton-Summerland Broncos.

Jim Stephen and Gary Koski will likely handle most of the blueline chores again with relief from Morris Wernicke and Bob Ouchi. Norm Schiman will start in the nets.

Game time for Saturday's clash is 8:30 p.m. Lucky number programs will be sold at the door as usual.

In other OJHL action on the weekend last place Penticton-Summerland and league leading Kamloops square off in a two-game series.

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